The Commonweal

April 15, 1949

A Party Realignment?

Oren Root

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First Year of ERP

Italian Colonialism

The Non-Political Churchill

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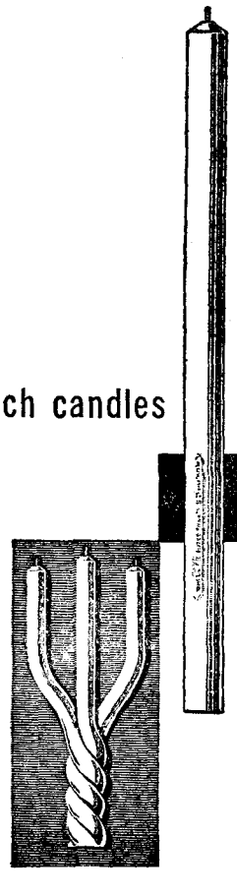

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The
COMMONWEAL

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First Year of the Marshall Plan

THE CONNECTION between the signing in Washington of the North Atlantic Pact and the completion of the first year of the European Recovery Program is unmistakable. And the American people generally have a vague idea that ERP is working, that things have been picking up in Western Europe. The actual facts and figures, moreover, indicate a degree of recovery that is a welcome surprise.

Chairman Paul Hoffman reports that production in the participating countries outside of Western Germany is already 14 percent above the pre-war figures, with steel setting the pace. Post-war coal imports from the United States have been sharply reduced, while 1948 crops aggregated a quarter more than the previous year and virtually reached the pre-war level for those countries. Another heartening sign is increased monetary stability. Another way of putting it is that the adverse monthly dollar trade balance in Western Europe dropped from 425 to 250 millions in 1948. Sweden brought its exports almost up to its imports, while Britain made the greatest proportionate improvement in narrowing the gap.

Western Germany itself has registered impressive gains since the currency reform last June. For the year, industrial output has risen 60 percent. Also a beginning has been made in the all-important area of integrating the German with other European economies; trade pacts with 20 other European countries are now in effect.

These trade pacts point to another deliberate and important result of the European Recovery Program: the building up of internal trade among the participating nations. Of the nearly 300 bilateral trade agreements which have been concluded, the French-Italian customs union (just signed in Paris) is the most spectacular. It will be a year before there is a cessation of tariff collections on the French-Italian border and six years before full economic union is attained, but the big change is under way and the Italians, particularly, are hopeful that in the process ways will be found to absorb their two million unemployed.

Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that all is proceeding merrily in European trade. There is the matter of 2,000,000 tons of coal now piled up in Belgium, Italy and Poland for which there is no effective demand. There are fears that European steel may soon be in surplus. Primarily there are increasing complications over trade with the United States. What these countries most want is our machinery and machine tools; however, what this country has in greatest surplus are shipping facilities, textiles, grain and petroleum. The natural feeling among our business men is that Europe should help the United States' economy by absorbing some of these surpluses. They are also fearful of the impending revival of European competition in world markets.

Congressional obstruction in authorizing continued funds for ERP reflects our failure to dramatize the Marshall Plan at home, to make vivid to the American people their share and their stake in the great enterprise of European recovery—their part in the past year's notable achievements. Appropriations for the plan's next fifteen months of operations are up for approval in the Senate and the debate enters its third week with only two proposed amendments acted upon (and roundly defeated) and twenty more, many of them quite technical in character, still to be considered. Five and a half billions is a mighty sum, but clearly this is an occasion when the Senate should not get too technical. When present European potentialities are contrasted to the only other alternative, it becomes plain that this is hardly the time to drive a spike in the wheel.

Creeping Anarchy

IN A SO over-regulated age, we take increasing satisfaction in the growing chaos of the canned music world. In our formative years it was fairly definite what a man meant when he said, "I have a radio," or "I have a phonograph." Now it requires higher mathematics to get the

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picture straight. A huge, new advertising campaign has just added a tenth uncertainty into the meaning: RCA's 45 RPM. The home "table model" or "console" can now have one or more of all these—AC, DC, AM, FM, Short Wave, Long Wave, TV, 78, 45, LP. "Radio" and "phonograph" don't mean anything useful until you know which of these are involved.

We can hardly expect a well-conditioned public to take this chaos quietly. It is not rational. It is not symmetrical. It could furnish a splendid issue for political and economic and ideological partisanship. The authoritarian solution would have a very tempting appeal, with a law decreeing the combination permitted and the penalties for all odd assortments. Instead of a law, a monopolistic act by big capitalism could impose the same peace. Petrillo, Caesar of the Musicians' Union, would naturally have an equal say in any such rationalization effected.

Once again, however, we find an uncultured emotion prevailing, so that the obvious anarchist solution looks ever better. Cheer these ten alternatives, and incite the canned entertainment industry to multiply them. Make it impossible to decide upon or afford any of these brand new music marvels. Perhaps we might gradually learn to whistle for ourselves.

Italian Colonialism

TRANSPORTED from Parisian palaces to the flats of Flushing Meadows, the UN General Assembly is down to work for a brief session. Arriving for the meeting, Mr. Gromyko renewed cordial contact with the West when, being asked by welcoming photographers to smile his way through a picture or two, he replied: "I could, but it would be artificial."

Prospects are, judging from this grim warm-up, that the prize-fight atmosphere will continue to prevail around the UN arena. This time the principal question to be fought over is what to do about the former Italian colonies in Africa.

The colonies are Italian Somaliland, Eritrea and Libya. Italy, having renounced title to them in the 1947 peace treaty, is asking the UN for trusteeship over them, and Foreign Minister Sforza has been instructed by his government to put before the Assembly specific assurances that Italy will develop self-government and improve political, economic, social and educational conditions in the colonies.

The disposition of these areas is sufficiently complicated to perplex even a peaceful, co-operative Assembly of deliberating nations. The colonies are populated by groups of various races and creeds, some of whom are friendly, some hostile, to the return of the Italians—or to the return of anybody. On the whole question, the big powers have several tentative proposals hanging fire. The British are asking for trusteeship over Cyrenaica, in eastern Libya. The United States has proposed giving part of Eritrea to Ethiopia. The Russians, when last heard from, were proposing an international trusteeship for the three colonies, rather than returning any of them to Italy.

However, the United States, Britain and France agree that some of these former Italian areas should be returned to her by the Assembly, which can do so with a two-thirds vote. Among the reasons for this position is that Italy, for years a seriously impoverished, over-populated country, must have land for expansion, and under the eye of the United Nations, an Italian trusteeship could be held responsible for setting up local self-governments, with constitutions providing racial equality. The ERP-revival of a healthy Italian economy, so essential to relieving poverty and communist discontent in Italy, will be further promoted by normal colonial trade.

Colonial privileges, like Italian trusteeship, can no longer be viewed as conquest and exploitation of subjugated peoples and territories. The time has come when colonialism, like the earth's surface or atomic energy, must be treated from a world point of view, if there shall ever be here a community of peoples adjusted to a common living-together. The United Nations can, theoretically, best be expected to take such a point of view, in this instance permitting Italy a justified and adequate relief for her chronic overpopulation, while seeing to it that local self-government is fostered in the colonies.

The question of the former Italian colonies is an opportunity for the UN to justify its existence. Although artificial smiles frequently make its existence a bother, the debate over the Italian colonies will at least serve to remind everyone present what the United Nations is for.

Sixteen Millimeters at Lunch Hour

THE MAN who used to bone up on correspondence school textbooks while his co-workers were frittering away their daily noon hour has up and left us. Getting ahead in the world today is a little easier—it takes no more time than reading some volume on influencing people.

But the lunch hour itself remains a puzzler. If you are not a Caribbean cigar maker or an insurance company clerk, with "muzak" to take a walk from, you have a problem. That is where documentary movies come in. At any rate, New York's Lord & Taylor department store has made a start by providing half-hour showings for its employees two or three times each month. A third of the staff have turned out for these shows, foregoing the books, games and other noon-hour beguilements offered by the store.

The other two-thirds have missed such minor film classics as "The Bees," "Scotland, Back-

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ground of Literature," "Ski Novice," "Grain that Built a Hemisphere" and even "The Window Cleaner," a short on "understanding those who serve."

Much as we admire documentaries, we should prefer a deck-chair in the sun or, in the weeks ahead, dawdling over a four-course meal.

The Non-political Churchill

THE CLOSER political implications of Winston Churchill's Boston speech have been closely analyzed by good political analysts whose words have excellent circulation. We gather that he likes the Atlantic Pact and opposes appeasement. But it is not simply political ability and rare statesmanship which make Churchill so outstanding a man and so triumphant an orator. There is some splendid stubbornness in him which insists upon man as an object of consequence. In the Century of the Common Man, after two world wars and an atom bomb, there are few persons who so surely exhibit a recognition of man's unique stature. No one in the world can convey the grandeur of human dignity in the life-giving, releasing manner of Churchill.

The diagnosis that human building and human organization have grown beyond "life size," and that men are dwarfed by their environment so that life is tragically out of scale, is a usual enough diagnosis. Seldom, however, does this estimate of the situation become quite clear. It is figurative talk, and the meaning cannot be set forth physically or with lines and graphs and numbers. The Boston speech sets forth the meaning with genius. The recurrent irony and humor of the talk were based on Chuchill's constant fundamental exaltation of a man's nature above the matter and environment which surround it. So also, the mordant criticism of the rôle of scientists and of academics rested on the sound base of man's responsibility and freedom. It would be a great waste of resources to pass by the less "political" and less immediately "practical" sections of the address, and to forget the message that Churchill felt it his duty to leave in our minds.

> It [conquest of the air] made the globe seem much bigger to the mind and much smaller to the body. The human biped was able to travel about far more quickly. This greatly reduced the size of his estate, while at the same time creating an even keener sense of its exploitable value. . . . The whole prospect and outlook of mankind grew immeasurably larger, and the multiplication of ideas also proceeded at an incredible rate. This vast expansion was unhappily not accompanied by any noticeable advance in the stature of man, either in his mental faculties, or his moral character. His brain got no better, but it buzzed more. The scale of events around him assumed gigantic proportions while he remained about the same size. By comparison therefore he actually became much smaller. We no longer had great men directing manageable affairs. The need was to discipline an array of gigantic and turbulent facts. To this task we have certainly so far proved unequal. Science bestowed immense new powers on man and at the same time created conditions which were largely beyond his comprehension and still more beyond his control. While he nursed the illusion of growing mastery and exulted in his new trappings, he became the sport and presently the victim of tides, and currents, of whirlpools and tornadoes amid which he was far more helpless than he had been for a long time. . . .
>
> One of the questions which we are debating here is defined as "the failure of social and political institutions to keep pace with material and technical change." Scientists should never underrate the deep-seated qualities of human nature and how, repressed in one direction, they will certainly break out in another. The *genus homo*—if I may display my Latin—is a tough creature who has traveled here by a very long road. His nature has been shaped and his virtues ingrained by many millions of years of struggle, fear and pain, and his spirit has, from the earliest dawn of history, shown itself upon occasion capable of mounting to the sublime, far above material conditions or mortal terrors. . . .
>
> In his introductory address, Dr. Burchard, the Dean of Humanities, spoke with awe of "an approaching scientific ability to control men's thoughts with precision." I shall be very content if my task in this world is done before that happens. Laws just or unjust may govern men's actions. Tyrannies may restrain or regulate their words. The machinery of propaganda may pack their minds with falsehood and deny them truth for many generations of time. But the soul of man thus held in trance or frozen in a long night can be awakened by a spark coming from God knows where and in a moment the whole structure of lies and oppression is on trial for its life. Peoples in bondage should never despair. Science no doubt could if sufficiently perverted exterminate us all but it is not in the power of material forces in any period which the youngest here tonight need take into practical account, to alter the main elements in human nature or restrict the infinite variety in which the soul and genius of the human race can and will express itself. . . .
>
> Human beings and human societies are not structures that are built or machines that are forged. They are plants that grow and must be tended as such. Life is a test and this world a place of trial. Always the problems or it may be the same problem will be presented to every generation in different forms. The problems of victory may be even more baffling than those of defeat. However much the conditions change, the supreme question is how we live and grow and bloom and die, and how far each life conforms to standards which are not wholly related to space or time.

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Do We Need a Political Realignment?

Shuffling the parties is not the answer to Tweedledee-Tweedledum politics

Oren Root

ONE SOMETIMES hears the wish expressed that there could be a realignment of membership in the major political parties in the United States. The Democratic and Republican parties are too much alike, it is said. Why can we not shuffle things around so that all liberals, progressives and the like are in one party and all conservatives, reactionaries and the like in another? Then things would be clear — so this view goes — and we would no longer be faced, as we so frequently now are, with a choice between Tweedledee and Tweedledum.

This is a plausible position, and one must sympathize with the sentiment behind it: that political parties should be something more than coalitions of divergent forces held together by the desire for power, that they should be founded on principle, that they should stand for something. There are, however, a number of powerful and persuasive arguments to the contrary which should not be overlooked. The purpose of this article will be to review and analyze some of those arguments.

It seems safe to say that the kind of realignment suggested would involve a major change in the political methods and traditions of the United States. Historically, the great issues which have divided this country have not divided it vertically between parties, but have cut horizontally across parties. The issue of civil rights, for example, is not an issue between the Democratic and Republican parties, but is an issue within each of those parties. The same was true of the pre-World War II interventionist-isolationist issue. Because the sitting President at that time happened to be an interventionist and a Democrat, the interventionist tendency was somewhat stronger in the Democratic Party and the isolationist tendency somewhat stronger in the opposition party. Even so, one has only to remember the Senator Wheelers on the one hand and the Willkies and Stimsons on the other to perceive that the issue of the war was not an issue between parties.

There are many other examples: prohibition, the issue of our entering the first World War, ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, the issues revolving around immigration quotas, and others. The only great exception was the issue of slavery. The Republican Party was founded and came to power in absolute and united opposition to the spread of slavery. On that issue the country was divided vertically and not horizontally. The result, let us never forget, was the Civil War.

*

THE FACT that these great issues, the slavery issue excepted, have been issues within parties and not between parties has not prevented their being discussed and resolved. They have been discussed and resolved, but the process has gone on simultaneously within both parties, often with varying results in various parts of the country. Thus at one time the Democratic Party was wet in New York but dry in Virginia, while the Republican Party was dry in Kansas and wet in Pennsylvania. Ultimately, in 1932, the Democratic Party swung decisively into the repeal camp while the Republican Party continued to straddle. The Democratic Party had resolved the issue in a way which the country approved, while the Republican Party had not, and this, almost as much as the votes cast against the depression, was responsible for the Roosevelt landslide of that year.

Another conclusion which it seems safe to draw is that today any realignment such as has been suggested would tend to be along economic lines, so that it would find this country divided essentially on a class basis—all the workers in one party, all ownership and management in the other—one party representing all those with incomes of more than, say, $3,500 a year and the other party all those with less. If anybody can think of a more tragic eventuality than that he must indeed have a good imagination. As early as 1904 Theodore Roosevelt foresaw precisely this danger. Writing in that year to Philander

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C. Knox, Roosevelt asserted: "It would be a dreadful calamity if we saw this country divided into two parties, one containing the bulk of the property owners and conservative people, the other the bulk of the wage-workers and the less prosperous people generally; each party insisting upon demanding much that is wrong, each party sullen and angered by real and fancied grievances." Roosevelt's efforts to make the Republican Party a servant of all the people rather than of special interests were inspired in large measure by his desire to prevent the very kind of realignment which some people today believe to be desirable.

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ANOTHER RESULT of the kind of realignment which has been suggested can best be expressed in the alternative, because, if all liberals were in one party and all conservatives in another, one of two situations would ensue. In the first situation, each party in turn would come to power from time to time, on the national, state and municipal levels, with consequent violent swings of policy from right to left or vice-versa every time there was a change of administration. It should be noted that the changes of administration might come about for reasons having nothing to do with ideology, as, for example, on account of corruption or inefficiency in the party in power; but inasmuch as the only alternative to the party in power would be a party which, by our supposition, held strongly opposing views, the violent swings in policy would follow nevertheless. This would be quite different from the present situation, where changes of administration are always moderated by the divergence of views within the party coming to power. If, for example, the Republican Party had won the national election last November, liberals would have attached great hopes to the moderating effect upon any swing to the right which would have been exerted by the more forward-looking members of that party. Likewise, there can be no doubt that conservatives in the country are today finding considerable solace in the brake upon the Truman program which is being applied by the old line members of the Democratic Party.

In the alternative situation which might ensue, one party would be so much more in tune with the needs and desires of the people than the other party that the latter would never be elected at all. The immediate consequence of this would be one party government, the evils of which in a democratic system do not need to be spelled out. The ultimate consequence would inevitably be a division of the party in power between right and left, or between the clique close to the throne and the clique away from the throne, or between geographical section and geographical section, so that in due course we would be right back where we started, except that the names would be different. Aside from the evil effects of the period before we thus went full circle, this eventuality would have the added danger that instead of splitting into two parts the ruling party might split into three or four or more parts, so that we would end up with government by party blocs, as in France.

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LEST WHAT has been written above has frightened any reader, let it be said that there does not seem to be any likelihood of the suggested realignment coming about in the near future. The principal reason for this is that, partly because the United States is so big and partly because Americans are by nature more interested in concrete solutions than in political ideologies, people become Republicans and Democrats for reasons which frequently have very little to do with political ideology. In the first place, tradition and inheritance have their effect upon the choice of party which a man or woman makes at an early age. This may not be an intelligent basis for choice but it is a natural one. Then, too, many a person's choice is influenced by the local conditions in which he or she comes of age: one will become a Republican because he lives in New York and is scandalized by the machine politics of Tammany Hall; another will become a Democrat because he lives in Georgia and the only effective way to fight for progress there is to fight within the Democratic Party—and so forth. Or a person's choice may be affected by the particular leader who dominates the national scene at the moment; that person begins to think seriously about political matters. It would be interesting to know, for example, how many Americans in their sixties are Republicans because they came of age in the era of Theodore Roosevelt and how many others are Democrats because their political awareness developed in the day of the other and Democratic Roosevelt.

Later in life an individual whose political affiliation has been made on some such non-ideological basis as here outlined may discover that on the ideological issue of the moment he is not in sympathy with the dominant group of the party to which he belongs. If he is just an ordinary voter he can easily transfer his allegiance to the opposition major party or he can go to one or another of the minor parties which spring up from time to time and which frequently are devoted to some clear ideological concept. But if he is active in political life it would ordinarily be political suicide to try to change parties. He would risk being considered a turncoat by the party he left and an opportunist by the party he joined. He

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would move out of associations where he was known and with which he was familiar into associations where he would be a stranger. Besides, a few years later the issues might have so changed that he would want to shift back again. Sometimes, under peculiar and exceptional conditions, a transfer of party allegiance has been successfully made in American life. LaGuardia, Henry Wallace and Wendell Willkie are outstanding examples. But they are the examples that prove the rule.

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WHAT THEN is such a person to do? The answer, under our system, is to stay in his party and fight within that party for the principles in which he believes. This is what he should do both out of practical political motives and because the result, for the reasons set forth in the earlier part of this article, is good for the country. This, at the moment, is what Senator Morse, Senator Ives, Congressman Javits and a growing number of other leading personages are doing within the Republican Party and, approaching the matter from the other side of the issues of the day, what Senator Byrd, Senator George and others are doing within the Democratic Party.

The compromises which this kind of program makes necessary are irritating to crusaders and idealists. In this particular period of history they are especially irritating to those of us Americans who class ourselves as liberals and who believe that government should serve the interests of all the people rather than those of a favored few. The real goal for liberals in the United States, however, should be not a realignment of parties but victory of the progressive wing in both parties. What vistas would unfold before a United States in which the Republican and Democratic parties—both truly committed (not in platform words but in actual performance) to the welfare of the average man, not only within the country itself but throughout the world—differed only as to how that objective could best be obtained! So long as there is any hope of achieving such a condition, liberals in both parties owe a duty to carry on the fight where they are. If the day ever comes when in either party all such hope is gone—well, sufficient unto that day is the evil thereof.

Liberation Through Penance

Knowing its history frees a people from the treadmill of the past

Jean C. de Menasce

PASSIONTIDE is a time of individual and collective penance. The modern mind scoffs at this attitude. Spinoza himself used to say: "He who repents is twice unhappy, unhappy and impotent. He who repents of an action suffers twice: once for having allowed himself to be vanquished by perverse desire; and secondly by useless sorrow." Psychologists and psychiatrists do all they can to dissuade us: remorse opens the door to the masochistic instincts in a man. To give in to remorse is always to give in to an unwholesome desire for moral suffering. Everything must be done to discourage repentance, which brings us to gloat voluptuously in humiliating ourselves and to find pleasure in the urge to seek vengeance against our own being.

Nor are modern moralists any more favorable to penance. This brooding over the past is irrational and without practical utility. You cannot change the past. What is done is done. Let us not cry over spilled milk: let us face the future and think of a new and better life, turning our backs on the past, which cannot be changed and is no longer in our power. And how many Christians, individually and collectively, overemphasize their plans for a better future and fail to recognize the healthful values in sorrow for the past?

Encouraged by so much advice, all to this effect, modern man and modern civilizations refuse to go in for individual or collective penance, but place all their hopes in drawing up plans and projects, dreaming of a better new world, thinking out blueprints for the future. And they are amazed to see that notwithstanding these plans individual and collective evil has a frightful fecundity, that each evil evokes and provokes new evils.

Feeling himself hemmed in by his past, man gives way to fatalistic theories, and he no longer has the courage to see behind the mask of so-called psychological, historical or economic necessities the grim visage of his sin that he has not regretted, and of the sins of his fathers that have not been expiated.

Christ does not begin His mission preaching to

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His audience attractive plans for "a new world." When He calls His disciples to build up a new civilization, He very simply beckons them to do penance and ask forgiveness.

When we pretend to ignore our past, that past, although ignored, exercises a sort of fatal coercion over our future. Bad actions exercise a sort of implacable tyranny over the man who refuses to sorrow over his past. And such a man, even when he thinks that he is orienting his life towards the future and climbing new heights, is, in reality, as a boat that is riding before the wind.

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HOW IS IT that penance is the only force capable of liberating us from the past? As paradoxical as that may sound, it is by recalling in our mind the past, that man undertakes a destruction which liberates. For the past has not exhausted all its possible effects. Out of our past actions we can find new motives to build up our lives. When we act in such a way, our past influences our lives not only in accordance with what each act was at the moment of our sin, but also according to the new potentialities which our freely-willed repentance engenders.

As individual repentance opens the well-springs of new energies, so social reforms must derive from the acknowledgment of past errors. Knowing its history liberates a people from the treadmill of its past. The first Christians, as well as the Jews, knew that collective penance was the great force that could destroy the accumulated effect of injustice, that the remorse of a people was like the sea, which purifies the waters of all the rivers.

The Old Testament with its ceremonies prefigures the New Testament. The history of Israel is the figure of the history of the Church. The Church is the true Israel, and the ceremonies of Israel must become the realities of our lives; the symbol becomes reality, for as one of the Fathers of the Church said, "The New Testament is hidden in the Old and the Old appears in the New. Before the Gospel nothing was gospel; after the Gospel everything was gospel."

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THE PENANCE of the people as a whole is the penance of the Church. Penance is the spirit of Lent and finds one of its greatest social expressions in the institution of the Holy Year. Huysmans, speaking of the souvenir stalls which have transformed the town of Lourdes into a five-and-ten-cent store, says that they are a counter-attack of the Devil on the Holy Virgin. With a rather blunt sensibility many think that the Holy Year is a sort of bright commercial trick to have many tourists crowd into Rome and bring their dollars into a depressed area. The Holy Year is not a glorified commercial enterprise. Nevertheless it must not have only individual and spiritual consequences, but also social and economic ones.

To measure the social importance of that collective penance we must place our Holy Year between the Jubilee Year observance of the Jews and the life of Paradise, the first being the figure, the second the fulfilment.

In the Book of Leviticus the Holy Ghost gives the laws for the Sabbatical Year and decrees that in that year all real estate property goes back to its former owners; that slaves and their families are to be liberated: "He will come back into his family and regain his former property because the land is Mine, says the Lord thy God."

The dynamics of human society were bogged down by its good and bad fortunes, its ups and downs, its accidents and calculated injustices. And the sweeping reforms of the Jubilee observance every 50 years gave everyone a fresh start. Individual holiness is not enough to break through the consequences of collective injustices and the anonymous work of the past generations. It was society as such, and even inanimate things, which had to stop, take a deep breath, interrupt the flow of economic and social exchanges, and in a great collective effort grope its way back to primitive justice. And in that collective expiation human society found a new strength for a new period of effort—which would again slacken and require a new sabbatical year.

Something of this biblical attitude must find expression in our Catholic Holy Year: the labor, housing and land reforms undertaken in the world are not a tricky way of taking the wind out of Communist sails, but should take effect as the necessary accompaniment of the pilgrimage, the passing of so many people—rich and poor—through the one Narrow Door. So doing, the Catholic will not only strive back towards a certain primitive justice, but prepare that brotherly society which must begin in time and find its fulfilment when time is no more: "And they will live together and God will dry their tears and there will be no more weeping, suffering and death, as all things will have disappeared, and I will make all things new."

★

IF WE LOOK back at the last hundred years of our political and economic life we see individual and collective weaknesses, negligences, brutalities and selfishness that have compassed destruction, and we find ourselves battered by the consequences of the consequences and caught in the terrible heritage of brutality. Mercantilism begot sweatshops; sweatshops begot suffering; suffering begot class struggle; class struggle begot dictatorship; dictatorship begot revolution;

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Hegel begot Marx; Marx begot Lenin; Lenin begot Hitler. And all these things accomplished in a Christian world must be expiated in one collective penance.

If modern psychologists have seen the dangers in a certain brooding over the past, modern sociologists could point out the dangers of a smug conscience. Such a conscience brings us to think that, as we cannot find in ourselves the reasons for so many setbacks and so many horrors, we must find the culprit outside of our group. The collective, smug conscience leads to seeking for the scapegoat. And people with a smug conscience will ruthlessly pursue the person or group which they think to be the source of every evil. The Russians will look for the Trotskyite saboteur; the smug Catholic will put all the blame on the Free Masons; the liberal will say that it is the Jesuits or the Vatican. Everybody thinks himself innocent and without sins. Only the spirit of Lent and of the Holy Year will remind us that evil is not carefully gathered all on one side, but has reached into every human heart.

Penance has been the most revolutionary force of history. It was by penance that the first Christians destroyed the weight of pagan civilization. It was by penance that the Catholics had the strength to realize the Counter-Reformation. It will be through penance that our individual and collective Fridays of death will pass into a Sunday of Resurrection. Our hopes for the future will only become consistent if we know how to face our past, not run away from it, and then, having destroyed smugness in ourselves, open the gates for Divine resurrection.

Symbols of Christ

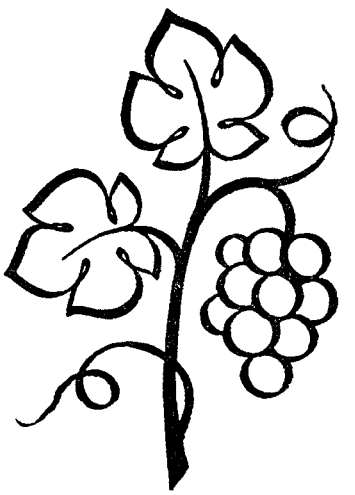
The True Vine

THE VINE has many shoots, which rapidly run wild if left without proper care. But if these are pruned and trimmed, they yield fruit in abundance. The writers of the Old Testament saw in the vine a fitting symbol of God's Chosen People. God planted this Vine in the Promised Land. There it took root, spread rapidly, and filled the land. In the end, however, the Divine Husbandman was disappointed in His Vine. "I planted you a choice Vine, all true seed; how then are you changed to a rank vine, a wild plant?" (*Jer.* 2:21).

Only Our Lord Jesus could say of Himself: "I am the true Vine," because He was the Son of God Who assumed flesh that fleshly men might be grafted as branches into Him, the Vine. Christ could not have been the Vine, except he became man, yet He could not have instilled Divine Life into the branches, had He not been God.

By being planted into His Death and Resurrection in Baptism, and nourished by the body of the Risen Saviour in Holy Eucharist, we live in an organic union with Christ. As the branches derive all their vigor and sap from the Vine, so do we bear fruit, not of ourselves, but through the grace of Christ. The branches which do not draw their strength from the Vine are doomed to wither. They must be cut away: they are good for nothing but firewood. The good branches must be pruned—the pruning knife is the "word" which Christ spoke, that is, His Passion and death (cf. *John* 15:3).

The True Vine, therefore, symbolizes Jesus, the God-man, our union with Him and our dependence on Him. It declares God's punishment on those who separate from Him, and His blessing on those who abide in Him.



"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit He cuts away; and every branch that bears fruit He trims clean, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Remain in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he can only be like the branch that is cast off and withers away. Such a branch is picked up and thrown into the fire to burn there" (*John* 15:1-6).

DAMASUS WINZEN.

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CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Land Reform in Brazil

A LAND REFORM Bill, introduced in the Brazilian Parliament by the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Daniel de Carvalho, has become a storm center in Brazil's political life. Its opponents have been calling it "both unconstitutional and communist," while its advocates claim that the bill is a means of implementing Articles 147 and 156 of the Constitution which state that "the use of private property is conditioned by the needs of the common good."

Writing in the Christian Democratic daily newspaper, *O Diario,* of Belo Horizonte, Benedite de Azeredo Coutinho, a spokesman of the Farmers' League in the State of Minas Geraes, came to the defense of the land reform bill, declaring that "it is necessary not to confuse Christian distributism with totalitarian socialism." The bill does not aim at destroying private property, he emphasized, but at making private property available to a larger number of citizens and at "promoting the welfare of the rural population which, in the past, has been abandoned and neglected by the public authorities of our country."

Senhor de Azeredo Coutinho pointed out that one section of the bill is an almost literal translation of part of the Argentine land reform bill passed under the Peron régime. This shows, he declared, how ridiculous it is to label the bill as "communist."

The land reform bill, according to the writer in *O Diario,* is nothing but the concrete application of the program which President Eurico Gaspar Dutra of Brazil formulated in his message to Congress in 1947, which included: "facilities for the adequate use of land fit for agriculture and grazing . . . measures for the improvement of rural housing, respect for the constitutional provisions declaring that 'work is a duty towards society' and that 'land privately owned may not be left uncultivated,' a public works program for the opening of land now unusable because of dryness, inundation, or swampiness, transformation of the real estate tax into an effective instrument for the rational utilization of the land and for the fight against any 'excessive concentration of property' in the hands of a few, reorganization of agricultural credit, encouragement of the establishment of farmers' cooperatives." (Belo Horizonte, 3/26—CIP.)

Mexican Synarchists Fight Back

THE MEXICAN Synarchist Movement has called a national congress of its leaders to meet in Mexico City, April 2-3, for the purpose of electing a new national leader and planning strategy against the action of the Government in rescinding the license of the Synarchist political party, "Fuerza Popular."

The latest "incident" of which the Synarchists complain is the forcible disruption of a meeting that they attempted to hold in San Juan de la Punta in the state of Veracruz. According to the Synarchist weekly, *Orden* (March 13),forces of the Federal army and police, by the use of tear-gas and clubs, broke up a Synarchist parade in that town on March 6. This action, according to the Synarchist paper, proves that the rule of the Revolutionary Party is "a rule of force, not a rule of law," as is claimed.

Such is the atmosphere in which the Synarchists will hold their 16th National Executive Congress. The Congress itself is being presented as a move in the conflict. The Synarchists have announced that the election of a new national leader will be held with the utmost publicity. The press has been invited, as have all members of the Synarchist Movement who care to attend, although the election of the leader will be decided by the district leaders and not by the membership at large.

The reason for the publicity is to "combat the error spread by some that over and above the national leader there is a secret organization" which directs the movement. It is this belief that is behind the charge that the Synarchists have been financed from abroad by the Spanish Falange and even by the Nazis. This accusation has always been vigorously denied. Meantime, although denied legal recognition as a political party, Synarchism continues its activity, and its paper appears regularly. (Mexico City, 4/2—CIP.)

Unrest and Progress in Colombia

ABOUT 50 political murders have been committed up to now in the campaign for the Colombian national elections, to be held in June, Father Albert Sanschagrin, O.M.I., Assistant Ecclesiastical Adviser of the Canadian Jocist (Young Christian Workers) movement, was told when he visited the country in the second half of March. "Unless energetic measures are taken, this new wave of violence may well lead to a repetition of the massacre of last April 9 when several thousand people lost their lives," Father Sanschagrin commented.

The coming elections will be for the Chamber of Representatives which now numbers 70 Liberals and 53 Conservatives. The four-year-term of the President of Colombia, Mariano Ospina Perez, a Conservative, will expire in the summer of 1950. Communists, who call themselves the Popular Socialist Party, have no political representation in Columbia, but dominate the leading labor union federation (CYC) and have succeeded in infiltrating some left wing groups of the Liberal Party.

While he was struck by the precariousness of the political situation, Father Sanschagrin was deeply impressed by the progress made in recent years by religious movements and institutions, particularly in the second-largest city of Colombia, Medellin, "the most dynamic and most progressive" of all South American cities which he visited recently. He praised the 13-year-old Catholic University of Medellin. "At this university," Father Sanschagrin stated, "one finds so much enthusiasm and vitality that there can be no doubt that it will exercise a constantly growing influence throughout the country.

"At Medellin I also saw an extremely active Christian workers movement including labor unions, cooperatives, legal aid and medical services, a newspaper, etc." (Bogota, 3/31—CIP.)

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OF NOTE

Social Institute in St. Louis

AN INSTITUTE on the social encyclicals for priests, endorsed by Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of St. Louis, has been meeting the past few weeks at Father Dunne's Newsboys Home in St. Louis, according to *Social Action Notes for Priests,* edited by Rev. George G. Higgins and issued monthly at NCWC headquarters, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., Washington 5, D. C. Emphasis in this discussion of the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI is on the economic background necessary for understanding them and on certain practical applications. The latter involve the following questions:

1. Is it right to speak of "Catholic" economics?
2. Do the Encyclicals favor a high excess profit tax on corporations?
3. Should union wage contracts be tied to the "Cost of Living Index"?
4. Will a high minimum wage law cause unemployment?
5. What was wrong with the Taft-Hartley Law?
6. Will the "New Labor Law" be an improvement on the Taft-Hartley Act and the Wagner Act?
7. Can the United States produce enough goods to guarantee every family a "living wage" of $4,200.00 a year?
8. How does the CIO's "Industry Council Plan" conform with the teachings of the Social Encyclicals?
9. Why is the idea of "Social Justice" a comparatively new idea?
10. Are labor schools a practical application of the Encyclical teaching?

Need for School of Christian Art

THE CURRENT issue of *Liturgical Arts,* "a quarterly devoted to the arts of the Catholic Church" (7 East 42 St., New York 17, N. Y.), says in a leading editorial: "We continue to hear rumblings concerning the need for the establishment of a school of Christian art; a place where the ambitious student could receive an adequate preparation for his work. There is little doubt that such a school is much needed in the United States at the present time; the difficulty lies in selecting the place where such a school could be located and, what is much more important, in selecting a director, a staff, and teachers. We suggest it might be wise to vest the direction of such a school in the hands of a lay person so as to insure freedom of action on a professional scale, such freedom of action being difficult for the clergy since they would be at the mercy of the necessities of the moment and subject to change without notice. It would seem reasonable to secure the services of artists with a *creative* bent and the capacity for instilling a similar creative enthusiasm in their students; in other words, no stuffy practitioners. And particularly a school without too much credit rating or other academic encumbrances. The staff could be a rotating one, composed of as many artists as might be induced to participate; several 'lively' professors of the history of art; several practicing architects (not of the academic or backward type); a professor of liturgy; one of philosophy and elementary theology. A minimum of formal lectures, but an elastic curriculum which would allow for seminars and free discussion between teachers and students. . . .

"Perhaps the existing art department at the Catholic University of America offers a good beginning, and it might well be that the answer lies in encouraging *that* school rather than in duplicating it elsewhere; at least until we have secured the services of a sufficient number of the right type of teacher. It is true that any school at a university will insist on degrees and academic credits, but that need not be too great an obstacle. If the director and the teachers are *alive* and aware of what is going on, the academic hurdle can be taken in stride. The present director of the art department at the Catholic University, Miss Clare Fontanini, tells us that 'the aims of the department are to provide cultural background consistent with a liberal education, to develop creative talent, and to train teachers of art, especially for the secondary schools. . . .'

"Those who are so interested in a school of Christian art might well consider encouraging an existing one and help to make it an important factor in promoting and fostering what we all so ardently desire and need—decent and creative art of the Church. The *official* authorities might also take a hand in this by paying more attention to these problems rather than succumbing to the tendency to consider art as a poor relation."

Plainchant

THE *Wanderer* of St. Paul, Minn., announces a concert of the St. Paul Catholic Choral Society "planned to exemplify the three distinct types of Catholic church music; Gregorian chant, medieval polyphony and modern polyphony":

> Plainchant is the official music of the early Church singularly adapted to the proper rendition of the psalms and canticles of the liturgy and developed to an eminent standard of perfection prior to the advent of medieval polyphony. Most prominent among the early promoters of plainchant development are St. Ambrose, fourth-century Bishop of Milan; Pope Damasus, who reigned toward the close of the fourth century; and Pope St. Gregory the Great, during whose reign at the turn of the seventh century this form of church music reached its climax of development.
>
> Little of enduring value was added in the subsequent centuries and, beginning with the modest introduction of polyphonic music in the ninth century, despite various attempts at reform, understanding of the peculiar language of the chant had practically vanished . . . It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century . . . [that] plainchant was once more restored to its ancient purity.

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The Labor Movement

The AFL and Reuther's Housing Program

LAST YEAR, when Walter Reuther ran into a blast of buckshot that almost blew off his arm, there were some who figured it would slow him up somewhat. People noticed that the man seemed more quiet and reserved afterward. Somebody had tried to kill him and almost succeeded. That could be a sobering thought for any man.

But Reuther is still the same. He proved it a few weeks back by coming out with a hot new idea for building 20,000,000 low-price houses on assembly lines set up in unused aircraft plants and shipyards.

It was a good idea. The only trouble with it was, or at least the principal trouble was, that Reuther is president of the United Auto Workers, CIO, and the building trade unions in this country are firmly AFL. There are 19 different international unions that belong to the Building and Construction Trades Council of the AFL. These unions all have to worry about keeping their members employed and paying dues. They have built their organizations on the basis of craft—plumbers, bricklayers, carpenters, etc.—and these crafts in turn have grown up as the result of ancient methods of building construction.

The AFL is very touchy on the subject of prefabricated housing, and Reuther's idea is certainly "prefab" and then some. AFL building trades officials will tell you that they have plenty of agreements with prefab housing contractors. And that is doubtless true. But nobody is kidding anybody. The AFL looks upon prefab housing with a cold and clammy eye, and the reason is perfectly simple and understandable. Prefab housing means less work for AFL building crafts and less work means less members, less dues, and so on and so on. Or so they believe.

The trouble with Reuther's idea was that he could not show in black and white how it would mean more work, and not more unemployment, for the established craft unions. He said it would, and as a matter of fact, maybe it would, because cheaper housing would certainly mean more housing and even though they got less work on each house, AFL workers might wind up with a bigger total of work because of the larger volume. Nevertheless, you can't blame them for being sceptical. Because everybody knows that the CIO would probably organize the workers in the prefab factories. The AFL has organized some of those already in operation, but most of them are either non-union or CIO. A group of craft unions just can't compete with one industrial union when it comes to organizing factories.

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FEW PEOPLE realize how little work there is for most building workers on the average house. Recently a San Francisco local, 1149 of the Carpenters Union, AFL, got together some figures that are interesting for several reasons. They broke down the labor costs on three homes built by AFL labor in the San Francisco Bay area, homes that sold for $12,000. They showed that the on-site labor costs made up exactly $1,829.15 of the $12,000. That is something to think about next time somebody tells you that high labor costs are the answer to your gripe about the high cost of housing.

But for our purposes the figures proved something else. They showed that carpenters were the only craft to get any considerable quantity of work out of the building of one $12,000 house. They got 59 days, which means that if there were three carpenters employed, each put in about 20 days on that house. Painters got 16 days' work, plumbers eight, laborers six and ten other crafts three days or less.

The figures would indicate that this was not a prefabricated house. So you can imagine how much work there would be for each craft in the setting up or assembling of a house which had been mostly put together in a factory. Many crafts would probably be eliminated entirely. Even in good times like these unemployment is a serious problem for many of the crafts. You can imagine what *they* imagine it would be like under wide-scale prefabrication.

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SO WHAT is the solution? It seems clear and simple to the observer, but it is fraught with pain and anguish and difficulty to someone who knows the human obstacles involved. The only sound answer is that the AFL begin somehow to break down the craft walls that separate its building workers one from another and that create this terrible scramble for work which has paralyzed building construction and the introduction of new and much-needed methods, such as that proposed by Walter Reuther.

If that were done, AFL building workers would pay dues to the Building and Construction Trades Department and could shift over from one craft to another or begin developing a general all-around skill in the assembling of prefab houses. A number of union officials would probably lose their jobs, though not as many as they imagine. But it would pay the building industry, or even the government, to put a few thousand officials on fat pensions for the rest of their lives.

The alternative is this kind of thing. On March 3 the Federal Housing Administrator sponsored a "low-cost housing conference" in New York City. It was one of 600 such conferences designed to get every element in the housing business—government, realtors, architects, contractors, labor, etc.—together and discuss ways and means of building cheaper homes for the home-hungry American. Who could possibly object to such a sensible idea?

The AFL building trades officials in New York City at first agreed to participate in the conference. At the last minute they ducked out, frankly admitting that AFL headquarters in Washington had told them to do so. Why? That was not made clear. But somebody pointed out that the AFL's executive council had passed a resolution opposing the idea of "an economy home" which they said was

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simply "an attempt to force middle-income families to accept sub-standard housing." In other words, we must resign ourselves to the notion that housing is strictly a luxury product.

So the AFL decides they won't even talk about it. That is certainly intelligence with a capital I. But it makes a little more sense when you know about the hobgoblins behind the scenes that are scaring the AFL building trades leaders literally out of their wits. Does anybody know a good hobgoblin exorciser?

JOHN C. CORT.

The Screen

W. Somerset

ONCE IN A while it is fun to see a movie that is intelligently acted and sophisticated in content, that is entertaining even though it doesn't send us out with a message important for its social significance. Such a film is the new English import, *"Quartet."* It is based on four short stories by W. Somerset Maugham, stories that have no connection with each other, although the first three are concerned with a son-parent situation and all four reflect Mr. Maugham's cynical attitude toward people and what fools these mortals be.

The first of the quartet is the funniest. Called "The Facts of Life," it's about a nineteen-year-old boy who, while at Monte Carlo, does not follow his father's advice about gambling, lending money or having anything to do with women. It would be utterly unfair to tell you what happens to the boy. This amusing piece is delightfully played by Jack Watling as the boy and Mai Zetterling as the woman with whom he gets involved before returning to England much wiser (he thinks) and much richer.

The second, "The Alien Corn," is the least successful, mainly because its theme is muddled and its climax is too suddenly bitter for the scenes that come before. It should win the attention of parents, however, who are worried about their son's opposing their will and choosing an occupation which they do not consider worthy.

The third, the most interesting from a psychological point of view, tells a story of a silver-cord relationship which the son has great difficulty in breaking even after his marriage. George Cole, as the son, and Hermione Baddeley and Mervyn Johns, as the parents, give excellent portrayals of a lower middle class English family whose main interest, other than in each other, is in flying kites. Perhaps the humor at times is a little too broad, but the characterization, the use of psychological mechanisms and the plot itself are exceedingly well handled in "The Kite."

The fourth item in "Quartet" is by far the best. "The Colonel's Lady" is actually a brilliant character study of a stuffy, pompous retired Army officer (Cecil Parker) who suddenly finds himself swept into fame when his mousey little wife (Nora Swinburne) writes a slim volume of poetry that gets rave reviews. What's more this man, who has been neglecting his wife and devoting considerable time to his mistress in town, is embarrassed and irritated by the interest being shown in him as only the husband of a poetess whose poems have a slight purple tinge and even mention a lover. You will probably guess the conclusion to this amusing little sketch long before it is reached, but the whole thing is done so well that you will enjoy its bitter-sweet satire to the end.

Obviously "Quartet" is a strictly adult affair, and perhaps even the kind of movie that should be approached cautiously by adults who may misunderstand Maugham's flippancies. The four directors who worked on the different stories have handled their assignments well; and R. C. Sherriff, who wrote the screenplay, has caught perfectly the Maugham pattern of life and fiction. If you have thought Maugham superficial as a writer, "Quartet" probably won't change this opinion, but it will remind you how vastly entertaining he is.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

On Translating the Bible

G. B. HARRISON

TRANSLATIONS of the Bible may be exact, literary, or realistic. The chief concern of the exact translator is to render the original, Hebrew or Greek, into its nearest literal equivalent in English, inversions, idioms and all. The literary version is neither exact nor yet colloquial, but readable. It is not quite poetry but has some of the emotional effect of poetry. It uses "thou" for "you" and "vessel" for "pot." Thus, for instance, the Douay version translates Matthew 26:14-15:

> "Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver."

A modern translator may revolt against this method on the ground that it is not current English, and, attempting modernity will sell Christ for thirty dollars. Yet there is something to be said for and against all three methods.

The objection to the exact method is that it makes hard reading—a criticism which has been made of the original English version of the Vulgate, published at Douay in 1582. But at least the reader knows what he is getting; and if he requires ammunition for a theological battle, text against text, the exact rendering is to be preferred above all others.

The literary translation is the most pleasing to read or to hear. It gives great opportunities for lovely rhythms and cadences; it demands exalted and dignified language. The supreme example of this kind of translation in English was the King James version of 1611, authorized for the Anglican church; it was itself a revision of the older

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versions of Tyndale, Coverdale and others, compiled between 1525 and 1568. The Douay version as revised by Bishop Challoner—the version most familiar to Catholics—runs it close, and is sometimes preferable, for indeed Bishop Challoner availed himself of the Anglican version.

Nevertheless there are certain disadvantages in these versions, for their English is from two to four hundred years old. For poetry, and especially for the Psalms, the older vocabulary and rhythms are superb. They are less effective for philosophy or for doctrine; for with time words change their meanings and their associations, and the reader who is not something of a literary scholar can easily be puzzled or misled. In the Epistles of St. Paul, for instance, the rhythms and semi-poetical language of the older versions often obscure rather than clarify the argument; while for narrative the more heightened style sometimes gives an unreal quality to the event. The divine humanity of the miracles becomes clearer when told in plain modern English.

In the last sixty years there have been several new translations of the Bible, though none, so far as I know, which tries to render the Gospel into everyday colloquial English, slang and all. It would jar horribly to hear Christ using such a phrase as "See here, folks;" but it would nevertheless be a nearer English equivalent of what He did say than "Amen, amen, I say unto you." Nor would the total result necessarily be to increase the reader's understanding; it would rather turn his attention to the translator to admire his cleverness or to execrate his irreverence.

The ideal translation of the Bible calls for infinite tact in the translator; even to the profane the Bible is a sacred book, so that the general principles which are suitable for a translation of *The Odyssey* do not wholly apply to the Bible. The translator must keep a nice balance between reverence and familiarity, affability and remoteness, colloquialism and dignity; his language must be clear, avoiding not only archaic and merely poetic words and inversions but also any phrase that has vulgar, comic or inappropriate associations. At the same time the vocabulary must be simple, living, easily understood by the unscholarly and a delight to the learned. It must also be fluent, easy to read aloud, even for the mediocre reader. Translation thus demands much, but since the reading of the Bible is no small part of worship much may be expected from the translator. He needs a diversity of gifts seldom to be found within one head—profound knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew, superlative skill in the use of the English language, and rare imaginative insight, for he must be at the same time poet and philosopher, preacher and historian, orator and story teller.

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MONSIGNOR Ronald Knox's translation of the New Testament is now well known. When it first appeared some readers were uneasy, for it is always disturbing to hear the old message in new words. And yet this translation even of famous passages, compares well with the more familiar versions. "Charity," says St. Paul in the Douay version, "is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil: rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." In the Knox version, "Charity is patient, is kind; charity feels no envy; charity is never perverse or proud, never insolent; does not claim its rights, cannot be provoked, does not brood over an injury; takes no pleasure in wrongdoing, but rejoices at the victory of truth; sustains, believes, hopes, endures to the last."

The old version is hallowed by familiarity; the newer—to one hearing it for the first time—would mean more and be more incisive. "You cannot serve God and mammon," runs the old version; in the Knox version, "You must serve God or money; you cannot serve both." To the modern reader "mammon" is a vaguely poetical abstraction; he has no doubt about the meaning of money.

There will however always be a natural instinctive prejudice against innovation, especially in the rendering of the Gospels, though the fair test of any new version is to use it without reference to other versions for a month or two for daily reading, and then to return to the older. The Douay version will, to many readers, be found to have faded somewhat after a couple of months of Monsignor Knox's translation.

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The new translation of the Old Testament* will arouse far less prejudice, and especially as the first volume to appear does not include the Prophetic books or the Book of Job. A comparison of versions will bring out the qualities of the new.

Thus, the betrayal of Samon by Delilah in the Knox version runs:

> "Come, said Delilah, thou dost pretend to love me; wilt thou not let me share thy thoughts? Three times thou hast put me off with lies, instead of telling me the secret of thy great strength. Thus did she torment him, plying him with questions day after day, and giving him no peace, till at last she crushed his spirit altogether, and made life a burden to him; and at last he told her the truth. I am a Nazarite, he said; that is to say, I am consecrated to God from birth, and this hair of mine has never felt touch of steel. If my hair were cut, my strength would leave me; I should lose it all, and become like other men."

The older version reads:

> "And Delilah said to him: How dost thou say thou lovest me, when thy mind is not with me? Thou has told me lies these three times, and wouldst not tell me wherein thy strength lieth.
>
> And when she pressed him much, and continually hung upon him for many days, giving him no time to rest, his soul fainted away, and was wearied even until death.
>
> Then opening the truth of the thing, he said to her: The razor hath never come upon my head; for I am a Nazarite, that is to say, consecrated to God from my mother's womb. If my head be shaven, my strength shall depart from me, and I shall become weak, and shall be like other men."

Or, again, the death of Jezebel:

> "Meanwhile, Jehu drove on to Jezrahel. As for Jezebel, when she heard of his coming, darken she must her eye-brows, and braid her hair; then she looked down from her window as Jehu passed the gate, crying out: Is all well? There was one Zambri, that murdered his master. Jehu looked up at

* Sheed and Ward. $7.00.

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the window, and asked who this was. Thereupon two or three of the eunuchs leaned out to greet him. Throw her down, said he, and throw her down they did; blood spattered the wall, and the horses trampled her under foot." (Knox)

"And Jehu came into Jezrahel; but Jezebel hearing of his coming in, painted her face with stibic stone, and adorned her head, and looked out of a window at Jehu coming in at the gate, and said: Can there be peace for Zambri, that hath killed his master?

And Jehu lifted up his face to the window, and said: Who is this? And two or three eunuchs bowed down to him.

And he said to them: Throw her down headlong. And they threw her down. And the wall was sprinkled with her blood; and the hoofs of the horses trod upon her." (Douay)

As will be seen Monsignor Knox has aimed at a more "literary" style than in his translation of the New Testament. It is not entirely modern English and it deliberately retains a trace of the slightly archaic flavor of an old tale. The method, for rendering the annals of the Hebrew people, is effective.

In translating poetry, Monsignor Knox is not, to my taste, so successful. Thus in David's lament over Jonathan he writes:

"Lament, daughters of Israel, lament for Saul, the man who dressed you bravely in scarlet, who decked your apparel out with trinkets of gold. How fell they, warriors such as these, in the battle? On thy heights, Gelboe, Jonathan lies slain. Shall I not mourn for thee, Jonathan my brother, so beautiful, so well beloved, beyond all love of women? Never woman loved her only son as I thee. How fell such warriors, what could blunt such swords as these?"

The Douay version is:

"Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you with scarlet in delights, who gave ornaments of gold for your attire. How are the valiant fallen in battle? Jonathan slain in the high places? I grieve for thee, my brother Jonathan: exceedingly beautiful and amiable to me above the love of women. As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee. How are the valiant fallen, and the weapons of war perished?"

The passage in the King James version runs::

"Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

Here the modern version in literary quality falls short of the other two; it lacks the rhythm and the phrasing is less vivid. The same weakness—a feeling of conscious effort—appears in Monsignor Knox's translation of the Psalms. Thus in Psalm 126 he begins:

"Vain is the builder's toil, if the house is not of the Lord's building; vainly the guard keeps watch, if the city has not the Lord for its guardian. Vain, that you should be astir before daybreak, and sit on over your tasks late into the night, you whose bread is so hardly won; is it not in the hours of sleep that he blesses the men he loves?"

As poetry, the older and more familiar version is preferable.

But if the new translation is weaker in rendering the verse, it is at its best in narrative, description and argument. There is, for instance, a freshness about the translation of the first three chapters of Genesis which fills even that familiar narrative with new and unsuspected depths of meaning. Indeed if those who find difficulties in the Hebrew account of the creation and the fall of man could come to this translation with minds unprejudiced by misinterpretation of the older version, most of the objections to the Christian story would disappear.

With the Old Testament as with the New, the fair test of the new version is not to compare famous and favorite passages but to read largely. Even to those familiar with the Old Testament, it will be an exciting experience.

There is, however, no need to engage in a battle of Ancient versus Modern. No one English version of the Bible is final and perfect. The wise reader will vary his reading. In this way he will become more aware of the different merits of each translation, and remain alert to the meaning rather than the sound of the sacred text.

Books

The Great Pierpont Morgan. Frederick Lewis Allen. Harper. $3.50.

WHEN THE SUBJECT of a three hundred-page study is as much of a legend as J. P. Morgan and his biographer, as in this case, prefers "to respect the privacy of private life," the result is inevitably little more than an account of an astounding financial career. What saves concentration on business from turning into a dreary business here is that throughout Mr. Allen is quietly, carefully, intelligently weighing the evidence on the ethics of the Morgan business code.

The muckrakers have made Morgan considerably more of a freebooter than he actually was. His first big coup, at the age of 26, to be sure was hardly a noble beginning. It was not that his fling at cornering gold was considered a reprehensible sort of speculation in his day, but that his brash venture involved an attempt to depreciate the currency at the height of the Civil War, a moment of acute financial crisis. And, long after he had acquired the mantle of impeccable respectability, J. P. Morgan seemed oblivious of the numbers of "innocent bystanders" who were financially ruined by his grandiose stock market operations in the course of his various wars for control—especially in his major battle with E. H. Harriman.

Every situation presented itself to the firm as an occasion for good profit — banking, selling securities, reorganization of railroads, stopping bank panics, even saving the national gold standard. Again—muckrakers to the contrary—the profit on certain historic occasions was decidedly modest. Yet the firm's "cut" was always there; good business years and bad, Morgan did handsomely. The only reason that his great fortune, at his death in 1913, was not among the few very biggest in the United States was the grand scale on which he had lived and the mania of his latter days for collecting world-famed masterpieces.

For all its concentration on making money the code

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had its points. Morgan was clearly a man of his word. He had a strong sense of responsibility (at least to the business world). His passion for reorganizations, mergers, giant corporations (or "trusts") stemmed from first-hand experience of savage competition for the Susquehanna Railroad in his early days. Then, as his involvement in railroad management and coordination grew, he gradually became convinced that "whenever he really *must* have order, he would have to impose it himself." In business and personal relations if ever a man laid down the law it was he.

However, the Morgan men who found places on so many major American boards of directors ordinarily exercised little overt control despite the resentment they aroused in the hue and cry about interlocking directorates. Further light on the code comes from the Morgan representatives' two preoccupations: that the heads of each business should be reputable, sober men of their word—"gentlemen" in the Morgan sense—and the business consistently show good profits.

No doubt the limitations of the Morgan idea of integrity are illustrated better by the contrasts in American living conditions the last four decades of his life than by any specific coups by the man himself. Low wages were truly appalling. Yet highly conscious Christian that Morgan was and capable of extreme generosity on occasion, he lived on a scale of imperial luxury, apparently oblivious of the condition of worker families or the social questions. His marked sense of righteousness did not function in this sphere, possibly because a three-hundred foot yacht keeps the rabble out of purview.

On balance J. P. Morgan's reputation is the better for Mr. Allen's dispassionate appraisal, which in its considered, sparing way builds up a convincing portrait of bold dimensions.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

The Chain. Paul I. Wellman. Doubleday. $3.00.

THIS BOOK—by the author of *The Walls of Jericho*—will probably become a best-seller. Also, it will probably become a motion picture. There is no effort involved in its reading and there is no necessity to think deeply about what you read; there is only an invitation, on almost every page, to have nice, safe, anonymous feelings about comfortably distant Goodness. This is not to say that Mr. Wellman, an old hand at the game, can't write. At times, when human beings are not on the center of the stage, he can. His description of a Kansas tornado is first-rate. But to echo an acute observation of a specialist in spectacles, there is less here than meets the eye—and more than meets both eyes.

The Reverend John Carlisle, ascetic rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Jericho, Kansas, struggles with the city's vested interests in an attempt to do several righteous things. Pretty young ladies, bored as all-get-out by the town's gay rich young blades, find him masterfully and mysteriously attractive; the local, fashionably intellectual Don Juan discovers him; wealthy business bosses behave as wealthy business bosses are supposed to behave; above all, things keep happening. He loses a following, he gains a following, he becomes an object of gossip and hate and, finally, posthumous veneration. Good doesn't exactly triumph but it does survive—in a low-cost housing project erected by the wealthy business bosses. The book dissolves in a soft, technibuttered glow.

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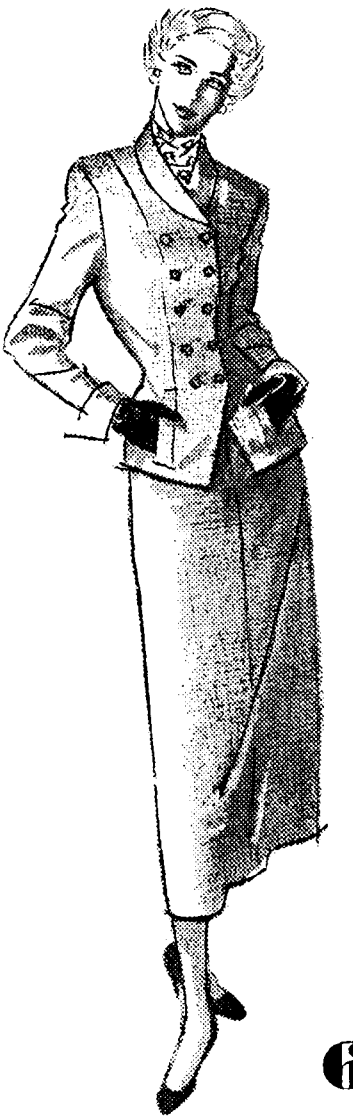

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best-seller is a style that is tremendously popular with readers of today's fiction. In it there is an elusive and a powerful, perhaps even a dominant, element that should, I think, be at least partially identified. As you read along in Mr. Wellman's book you realize that the emotional depth your eye had seemed to see is not really present at all. Something else, something counterfeit, is there—placed and kept creakingly in position by a maker of an "illustrated" primer-of-the-emotions, who sells his product to adult readers. And here, I believe, is our "key."

Mr. Wellman's blatant, heavy-handed *comments on* emotion and thought, which occur in the midst of vigorously sketched physical scenes (looming before your eyes like large, crayon-scrawled arrows), suggest very strongly the technique of the comic-strip: a boldly drawn, rapidly shifting stage, complete with actors forever explaining their predicaments and the predicaments of others. The explanations never go more than an inch beneath the surface, the "people" making them never care, and the ventriloquist-cartoonist, piling layers of exposition on top of one another, is interested only in achieving an ABC simplicity.

Mr. Wellman, more successful, gets in the other twenty-three letters. MURRAY HICKEY LEY.

The Journals of André Gide. Volume III: 1928-1939. *Translated by Justin O'Brien. Knopf.* $6.00.

THE MATTER of Gide is the matter of his principle, the guiding motive implementing all his writing, and nowhere more explicitly than in the *Journals*. The value of this third volume of Justin O'Brien's careful translation, which contains the notebooks written between Gide's fifty-ninth and sixtieth years, during the decade preceding 1939, is that the principle receives the most mature exposition. It also undergoes two of its severest tests: the public test of communism, the private test of Madame Gide's death. Gide was led by the nature of his principle towards the former, but it was equally its nature that caused him to resist his wife's influence, to admit the bond with her, to acknowledge in revolt and protest his debt, to call it the secret drama of his life, and not to expatiate on it. For—the *matter* that has concerned Gide is the freedom of his intelligence, a concern characterized, to be sure, by his peculiarly individual compulsion and by the rigidity and stringency of his candor.

In questioning the influence on his thought of a need for self-defense, Gide concludes the influence to have been, "my quest before this problem that nature forced upon me and for which I had to find a solution." At first it was the personal problem of feeling oneself an exceptional being ("I had sufficiently accepted the exceptional not to be very much surprised when I had to become aware of it likewise in sexual matters"); then the problem of a "Christian formation (or deformation)"; finally the problem of achieving in himself "a happiness that could do without illusory." The effort was to find truth, authenticity, God, without recourse to a mystical faith, to dogma, to revelation, to the supernatural, to any orthodoxy. "What we call impulses of the heart is but the unreasonable jostling of our thoughts; it is still in the head that the drama is enacted, and it is again the brain that man needs in order to love." The spiritual dilemma is to be resolved by the intelligence.

No wonder the USSR proved to be a deception. Gide says that he stifled in Marx's writings although he labored through four volumes of *Das Kapital* before he gave up. Actually, he admits it was not Marx but the Gospel that led him to communism. Moreover he made up his own definitions of communism and individualism and so could reconcile them in his own mind. He recognized "the necessity of a credo to bring together individual wills, but he denied any value in adhering to it without free consent. "I did not escape from the authority of Aristotle or Saint Paul to fall under theirs." What really led him was that hope of man's struggle for freedom finding an earthly solution. He had thought himself to be emotionally, temperamentally, and intellectually a communist but, unable to subscribe to any disicipline except that of free enquiry, unable to tolerate any demands but those of his own compulsion, he was gored by the horns of his own dilemma.

He remained temperamentally unfit to surrender his ego, to allow any self-abnegation. "As soon as one considers man and not God responsible, one cannot resign oneself to anything." Gide is literally the restless, sleepless warden of self-doubts. Yet, although he has never been able to remain long in one place, unlike malcontents such as Lafcadio Hearn and D. H. Lawrence, he does not move to seek salvation in other races and landscapes. His motion is part of the drama he carries within him, "the debate of the individual with whatever keeps him from being authentic, with whatever is opposed to his integrity, to his integration" and *that* he knows no geography nor history can contain or appease. He is seeking a mental climate in which all things may be examined anew without let or hindrance, for has he not discovered the exceptional, the inadmissible, to be more frequent than he had been told? And has he not discovered the distinction of difference, heterogeneity, to be the condition of man and nature, so that the only valid credo must take this into account?

This is Gide's basic tenet, call it mortal sin, destruction of society, counter-revolution, or subversion to the state, or call it man's hope, peace on earth, or grace abounding: this reservation that whatever is, or whatever is presented for belief, may not be the best nor for the best, but everything must be freely, freshly, incessantly re-observed and re-appraised. "One is not concerned with sham. But man's figure deserves to be constantly enriched." Gide offers no theory, builds no system, develops no philosophy of amelioration. He does not say that he has found God; he hopes only that he may have indicated a way. He asks only to be heard because "out of harmony with his time—this is whatever gives the artist his *raison d'être*. . . . He counteracts; he initiates." There is the old ring of individual anarchy in this, but Gide sees no contradiction between that change and the one "that man achieves nothing worth while without constraint and that very rare are those capable of finding that constraint in themselves."

What in the end the principle involves is a field of free enquiry in which the intelligence acts under constant threat of its own disintegration. And this may well be the secret of Gide's influence. In that style which is said to be the purest in French writing of today, about which Gide warns that a betrayal of form could betray his thought, a comma destroy his harmony, there may be found the whole fascination of the combat. "Order," Gide writes, "lies in not letting the eagle destroy the dove." FLORENCE CODMAN.

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The Gold Rush Album. Edited by Joseph Henry Jackson. Scribners. $10.00.

CALIFORNIA'S fabulous century is now being celebrated by a spate of what might be called centennarratives. Among these, and outstanding in content, format, and scholarship is *The Gold Rush Album.* Hundreds of illustrations, from daguerreotypes, cartoons, and sketches by travelers (among them Audubon and Bayard Taylor) have been reproduced with uncommon effectiveness and beauty—Senate Executive Document No. 108 even possesses the delicate macabre charm of a Georgia O'Keefe. These pictures, from State libraries, Historical Societies, and private collections, are enriched by lively, compact and authoritative text, from which good literary placer-mining has washed the verbal sand of Victorian style, and the pyritic glitter of too-tall tales, and left gold in rewarding quantity.

The incredible rigors of all the four main westward routes leave us to wonder, not at the casualties, but at the number of survivors. Indian attacks, misleading maps (or none), salt-flats, and the formidable Sierras, or the delusive "short route" of the Gila Trail with its final seventy-five waterless miles, faced the overland travelers, while the two water-routes, via the Isthmus or the Horn, advertised to the "solid men" of the East as "safe, swift and comfortable," offered Chagres fever, hurricanes, and a diet of "two bugs to a bean" on the packed Clippers.

Once at the golden goal, fortunes, fandango-houses, and a brawling miracle of a life met the tired men—"a most almighty beautiful democratic amalgam, b'gosh." Thievery and murder flourish, and as Mexicans, Chinese, and South Americans came to dig and stake out claims, "white supremacy" condoned attribution of much of the crime to these "furriners" and furnished an all-too-ready pretext for ousting them and taking over title. But as the rich, chaotic days yielded to organization and order, they left an 18-carat heritage of tough, warm-hearted courage, a gusto for achievement, and a "pride in the ability to accept troubles as healthy challenges to head and hand."

Mr. Jackson has given us a family album of our national ancestry, to be pored over by east and west alike, with amusement, amazement, horror and pride. In fact, with anything except tedium. JESSIE H. HIRSCHL.

Seeds of Contemplation. Thomas Merton. New Directions. $3.00.

FRA LOUIS'S *Seven Storey Mountain* has been compared with Augustine's immortal *Confessions* and, consequently, this book is being advertised as a second Thomas à Kempis. I suppose time will tell. It may be my own ignorance, but it seems that not since the days of the "Thundering Abbot" de Rance, who founded the Trappist version of Cistercian interpretation of the rule of Saint Benedict, has there been so much of a stir about the silent monks and so much publicity concerning one of them. Even the last issue of the *Partisan Review* proudly displays the "Trappist Monk" as the author of one of its poems.

If publicity is a medium that has been added to the command to teach all nations and if it is in itself an indifferent means to make men sit up and listen to the voice of a witness of Christ, we must revise our standards of good taste, our traditional dislike of the strident voice of salesmanship and our apprehensions of things that do

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not grow silently but come up with a loud pop. Especially when the author himself, as he agonizingly and insistently has assured us, acts under strict obedience and does nothing in the commercial line himself. I, for one, have not made up my mind and am open to new convictions.

Thus smoothing the apprehensive frown on my own face I take a second look at this book. Those better versed in the spiritual writers of the past than I am may say that there is nothing really new in it and that it sounds like the notes of a good novice who, coming from bar stools, juke boxes and sessions in Greenwich Village, discovers, so to speak, America all over again. But that is exactly the value of this book: to be an account of the personal experience and discovery of an intellectual of our own day, who speaks our language, has our problems and our temper. What good, in a way, is the language of Saint Teresa of Avila, or the Gallic and bourgeois style of the Little Flower, both of which reflect the style of their age, and are obstacles to men who need the stripped-down, caustic and smart language of our day? Even the little angry jabs which interrupt the peaceful flow of this beautiful English and the controversial undertone of so many of its chapters reveal a man of flesh and blood, not somebody petrified by the wax and plaster poured over a human being by the spiritual drill of a novitiate.

Is it not a gain that the so-called worldling will try this book and read it and that the world of the seven storey mountains will become his world? The new wisdom the author wears like a brand new garment, but even that is an advantage to us men of this age, which has a horror of the finished product and is so curious to see what makes things tick. That this book is "dated" is nothing that should sound like detraction, but a warning to the reader that, if he takes it as the last and only word on the spiritual life, a sort of compendium of the most perfected, progressed and developed spirituality, he might wake up to find himself moulded to the image of a definite school. There are others as well. We should not forget the old "timeo lectorem unius libri"—fear the man who is the product of but one book.

With this in mind, read the book, a chapter a day, and with pencil in hand. And try to do what Thomas Merton has done. You and the world will be better—and better off!

H. A. REINHOLD.

Mist on the Waters. F. L. Green. Harcourt, Brace. $2.75.

BARTY FINGAL, a ne'er-do-well, and Pelancey, an unsuccessful small-businessman, obtain a sum of money from one Malloy by blackmail. Malloy, who has robbed his employers to pay it, commits suicide. In the small Irish city of Belfast, their guilt soon becomes known to a great number of people. The police take no action, but the two men, in their different ways, are overcome with remorse. The money proves of no use to them, but they cannot bring themselves to give it back. They realize that it is beyond their power to make any restitution to the dead Malloy. Finally they both were destroyed along with the money in an accidental fire, and Mr. Green seems to consider that they have thus made their peace with God—in Whom they do not, apparently, believe.

I found this novel very uneasy reading, mainly because the author spends most of his time ascribing motives to the actions of a group of characters whom he does not

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fully understand. We can see what a man does, but his motives for doing it are a complete mystery to us unless we share his fundamental assumptions. We are still more hopelessly out of our depth when we attempt to read the mind of God. Mr. Green's upbringing as a member of the English upper middle-class bars him from any adequate understanding of Pelancey and Barty, in my view, and the absence of a clear line of motivation in his book seems to bear me out. The same fault vitiated my enjoyment of his "Odd Man Out," both as a book and as a film.

If the inner action of this psychological novel fails to convince, it is probably of minor importance that the outer action, too, fails to give the illusion of life.

VIVIAN MERCIER.

Japanese Prints of the Ledoux Collection. Part III. Buncho to Utamaro. Weyhe. $25.

THE "DISCOVERY" by certain late-nineteenth-century western painters of the subtle linear and spatial qualities of Japanese figure prints, and their adaptation of these in their own work, gave impetus to the collection of Japanese prints; but these painters' concentration upon formal elements caused a distortion in appreciation. The constant enthusiasm of collectors, who came as they delved deeper to understand that the prints first popularized were often the least worthy, has tended to remove the appreciation of Japanese prints to a special, antipopular plane.

Mr. Louis V. Ledoux, author of this volume and of the two which precede it and the two which are to follow, is, certainly, a most special collector. His collection, considered the best in this country, is limited to 250 prints; when he has found a better example or impression, he has discarded the less distinguished; to ensure the finest reproduction, whether in color or black and white (in this volume, 20 prints are in full color, 39 in halftone), he has confined the present volume to 400 copies priced at $25, thereby virtually limiting its purchasers to museums, college libraries and fellow specialists.

And yet the cost of the volume is so much smaller than the worth of any of the prints reproduced; and as their owner remarks in his brief preface, the prints themselves are so perishable and will doubtless so soon be scattered; and also, he might have added, few are as able as he to tell us so much about them—about their intention and background as well as their appearance.

As Mr. Ledoux perspicaciously notes in connection with a Kiyonaga print (of the two "stars" of the volume, Kiyonaga and Utamaro, I gather that he prefers the latter): "In considering Japanese prints it should always be remembered that they were designed and published to suit the taste of middle-class townsmen; . . . the people whom they were made to please belonged to a bourgeoisie of about the same position as that which buys the so-called 'funnies' in our subway news-stands, though without wishing to find in them subtle allusions to Elizabethan sonnets or such lyrics as those of John Donne or William Blake."

Note especially the final clause. The period during which Japanese prints flourished is known variously as the "Popular" or "Plebeian" period (historically, the Edo or Yedo period, 1615-1866): an era when a united Japan, not yet penetrated by westerners, enjoyed under the Tokugawa Shogunate unprecedented peacefulness and

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With such evidence of nationwide support in the first month of the 25th Anniversary campaign, The Commonweal has reason to be confident that it will be able to continue publication. If more readers from every section of the country will contribute one or more $25 Silver Jubilee units—which may be sent in installments over the next few months—these new contributors will make continued publication possible.

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also a sharp shift in cultural orientation: for the first time the arts and their appreciation, hitherto monopolized by the privileged classes, became available to commoners. The "commoners" to whom Japanese prints were addressed were, however, in Mr. Ledoux' phrase, "poetry minded"—conversant with Japan's historical and literary and sentimental lore.

Mr. Ledoux's comparison of Japanese prints to subway comics is perhaps a bit forced (one wonders how many he has actually read); some Japanese prints were, yes, especially in later periods, intended to be comic; but the favorite subjects were not comic but popular courtesans, geisha, actors and love scenes; some, even of the best, were frank fashion plates. So perhaps a better comparison might be our chromo calendars and touched-up photos of movie stars—except that Japanese prints were not reproductions in the sense that we know reproductions; each was a unique collaboration of the original artist, the engraver, and the printer who colored the blocks prepared by the engraver and individually drew off the final impressions. Undoubtedly a large proportion of Japanese prints were, as anyone who has visited Japan or a Japanese curio store in any country can testify, trash. Yet the best of them communicated, outside the appeal of their formal elements, a double poetry: one springing from the formal elements themselves, the subtle lines, color tints, gestures, space handling (these being what enthused Whistler, Degas, Manet, Lautrec, etc.), the other from the literary and historical allusions (a Japanese of the old school would perhaps call these the contemplative elements). It is these which Mr. Ledoux, without wasting words, without neglecting the descriptive and bibliographical details useful to the student, is especially helpful in tracing. DAVID BURNHAM.

Introduction to Typography. Oliver Simon. Harvard. $3.00.

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